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InfoChange

Association of Humanistic Counseling



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Letter from the President

By Jeff L. Cochran, Ph.D.



Dear AHC Members:

I think of AHC – made up of our many hard working members – as “the little engine that could.” While we are one of ACA’s small divisions, we are also one of the four founding divisions that dreamed up what became ACA and our counseling profession...and we continue to do impressive work, especially for our size.



A tagline that has long been used referring to AHC is: “The heart and conscience of the counseling profession.” This tagline reflects well our values:

- Assertion for the dignity of each person
- Acknowledging the responsibility (and ability) of each person to own much of her/his own destiny
 - With each person having within one’s self – within one’s experience – answers to next steps in her/his development
- Appreciating the power of therapeutic relationships - of person-to-person connections, of deep empathy and authentic unconditional positive regard – to heal and empower persons in need...to heal and empower us all

And for maintaining these values in a hurried world, a world where even very well-meaning counselors can sometimes forget these critically empowering concepts; a world in which we seem inundated with implications of and needs for quick fixes and easy answers, many of which leave us feeling discouraged, once the quick fix is paid for, yet the problem persists.

The tagline also reflects well some of our well-known projects within ACA, such as the Empty Plate, the oldest and most consistent program within ACA to leave a positive impact for persons in great need within each conference city (watch for future newsletter article detailing more of EP’s history); or our AHC Day of Wellness at ACA, a set of experiential workshops provided within ACA to facilitate members focus and progress in development as persons for the work they do as counselors (watch for future newsletter request for stories of what our Day of Wellness events have meant to you). Just these organizational examples exemplify how much we have done with so little, and this is without even getting into the impressive individual accomplishments that I have had the privilege to celebrate over my years as Awards chair.

But we are small, 458 of 56,097 ACA members at last count. Being small in numbers it is vital that we work together and support each other. Recognizing the challenge of humanistic research in a hurried world and the isolation some of our members feel, a core group is working to form AHC’s “humanistic research groups” (HRGs). The goals are to: 1) advance the research and knowledge of the counseling field in connection to the humanistic approach, and 2) build new and invigorating connections between AHC members, now that technology allows us to work together even across great distances. By working together and combining resources, we can accomplish more to further the progress of the humanistic approach to counseling.

So, consider answering the survey we use to recommend persons to HRGs, with stratified skill levels and common interests. Within the survey you will see suggested interest areas and ways to contribute. Then join a HRG and contribute at the level that you are able.

https://johncarroll.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eOEyzYl6mBGxPW5



Together we can make the world a better place!

AHC National Award Winners

June 2015

Humanistic Leadership Award

Elizabeth recognized for being AHC's "go-to" servant-leader, having started the year as our webmaster, and ended well-known for her ways in being always willing to move us forward, with smart, competent solutions and an ever-present positive outlook

Vicki recognized primarily for her work developing our Emerging Leaders program, but also for her encouraging, smart, energetic, "can do" way of maintaining enthusiasm in support of others.

Past President Award

Matthew Lemberger-Truelove was recognized with great appreciation for the passionate, hard-work that he brought to the job.

Distinguished Journal Reviewed Award

Linwood Vereen for high-quality, thoughtful reviews.

Humanistic Advocacy & Social Justice Award

Brian Hutchison recognized for taking supportive action for the wellness, person-to-person dialog and connections for the activists and community members affected by and working for change in Ferguson, MO – all from a strong humanistic counseling point of view

Rebecca Heselmeyer recognized for her multi-focused work towards breaking cycles of oppression and for leading service learning trips to the Dominican Republic, Sri Lanka and India, expanding her and her students' appreciation of different world views.

Outstanding Humanistic Clinician Award

Kathy Trebatoski recognized with recognition of her work with non-profits and under-privileged persons, and her hard work and humble dedication in service to our profession.

Outstanding Humanistic Educator/Supervisor Award

Jenn Pereira was recognized for her "person-centeredness," deep personal connections, modeling the importance of relationships with students and advocacy for similar high-quality work in others

Dee Ray was nominated by multiple colleagues, graduates and students for her caring compassion and exceptional abilities as teacher, mentor and supervisor, for her genuine interactions and embodiment of unconditional positive regard.

It is time to start thinking ahead to nominations of the highly deserving humanistic counselors and educators in your life for the 2015-2016 AHC National Awards. Soon it will be time to review award categories of the AHC webpage and nominate the persons that you would like considered for national recognition.



Reluctance to “Adulting”

By Angela Marie Catena,
ABD, LMHC

I am hoping my experience will resonate with those who take the time to read this. As I enter my fourth year in my Doctoral Program in Counselor Education at the University of New Mexico I find myself being much more reflective of my journey than I have been in the past. As I grow, both academically and professionally, I have noticed the list of responsibilities also grows, naturally.

I have found myself in a number of leadership roles recently. I am President of the New Mexico Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues in Counseling, an instructor for two courses, and am continuing my work as a Training and Development Specialist for the university focusing on education and prevention efforts in the areas of suicide, hate bias and discrimination, alcohol and substance use, hazing, interpersonal violence, and intimate partner violence. I'd be lying if I said I don't encounter the occasional Imposter Syndrome. Being a clinician is something I know; something I am both familiar and comfortable with. The uncharted territory of these new roles has left me with a bit of soul searching to do.

I oftentimes reflect on what it means to be an effective leader; what qualities do I value in a leader? When I find myself scrambling for an answer I come back to the main pillars of Humanistic Philosophy. For me the core conditions extend far beyond the clinical setting and are present in every aspect of my life, both personally and professionally.

With every person I come into contact with I wish to inspire them to be the most successful person they can become. My leadership style is one of empowerment; facilitating a sense of ability in my clients, students, executive board members, friends, family, coworkers, etc., while remaining open and receptive to be able to learn from them as well. I believe empowerment and support come from authentic relationships that allow for reciprocity, growth, and safety.

When I walk into a classroom I become overwhelmed with joy and excitement. I hope to ignite a fire inside of my students, one of passion and love. I encourage my students to explore their interests in a way that will hopefully facilitate a sense of meaning and purpose within their lives. My role as an instructor goes beyond training competent and knowledgeable clinicians. The idea of holism is one that my teaching philosophy is based upon. An individual's sense of grounding is fundamental to their personal success and happiness, which then bleeds into all other aspects of their lives.

All too often we become so occupied with our day-to-day lives that we forget to practice what we preach. The values of meaning, love, hope, responsibility, and ultimately holism are only some that I wish to instill in those I interact with. Yet when I become lost in the busyness I lose sight of those same values.

Having the awareness to take a step back and evaluate my current situations brought me right back to the Humanistic Philosophy. With this renewed sense of grounding I am even more excited to take on this Fall semester and my new positions in leadership!



Our 2014-2015 Make a Difference Grant winner, Kristie Opiola, provided the following description of her grant winning research project (watch for a progress update soon):

By Jeff L. Cochran, Past-Grant Committee Chair

Relationships are at the heart of who I am and what I believe is important for people to heal and lead happy, healthy lives. My dissertation is focused on helping children who have experienced attachment disruptions and/or relationship trauma at an early age. In my clinical work, I witness the challenges that adoptive children and families endure related to connecting and understanding the adoptive children's experiences. Researchers suggest early life experiences lay the foundation for children's healthy growth and development. Adopted children often experience numerous losses with primary caregivers, repeated traumatic events, and disrupted placements that put them at risk for long-term relationship troubles and behavioral problems (Hughes, 2006; Purvis et al., 2007).

I have chosen a therapeutic modality grounded in the humanistic philosophy, Child Parent Relationship Training (CPRT). CPRT is a group psychoeducational counseling model that focuses on the parent-child relationships as the curative factor in helping adoptive families who are struggling to connect and create a new family (Landreth & Bratton, 2006; Holt-Carnes & Bratton, 2014). The goals of CPRT align closely with my goals of working with children and families by attuning to the experiences and feelings of the hurting child, connecting and understanding the parents' experiences, normalize the parents' experiences and empower the parents to understand and connect with their child. By utilizing CPRT in my research and practice, I am able to honor and respect the worth and innate wisdom of the children and families I work with by honoring and respecting their relationship.

The study will include 60 parents who have adopted children age 2.5 to 6 years old and are experiencing problems in this parent-child relationship. Parents will be split into two groups, a treatment group who will participate in a 10-week psychoeducational group of CPRT and an active control group who will receive individual parent consultation.



I will provide small group interactions for the treatment group in order to model and educate parents in the humanist philosophy and skills of child-centered play therapy (CCPT). Parents will conduct weekly-supervised play sessions with their child to foster a more attuned and empathic parent-child relationship and increase the parents' understanding and sensitivity to their adoptive child's underlying needs. This approach highlights the strengthened parent-child relationship as the avenue for change. Therefore, I am passionate about making a difference in the lives of adopted children and families by helping them relate and attach with their new families.

If you or a counseling graduate student that you know is considering conducting research with salient humanistic content that will make a difference for persons in need, consider applying or suggesting that she/he check our AHC website soon for materials guiding applications for our Make a Difference Grant, which includes \$750 for research expenses.



Back-to-School Tips for a Humanistic Counseling Classroom

By Megan Speciale, PhD, LMHC

For many AHC members, the month of August signals the commencement of the academic season. No doubt a hectic and oftentimes stressful time of year, students and educators are getting ready for classes and considering the possibilities of the upcoming semester. In the midst of the frenzied transition from summer vacation to the classroom, it is easy for class participants to become overwhelmed and anxious about getting started, which can lead to a preemptive disengagement with peers, teachers, and the course materials. However, counselor educators are in a prime position to counter the ill effects of back-to-school jitters by establishing a compassionate, authentic, and empathic class environment that supports counselors-in-training in their personal and professional growth. As the humanistic classroom is relational, wellness-oriented, and responsive to students' development, educators can orient any counseling curriculum, regardless of subject matter, with humanistic principles.

Here are some tips for your classroom this year:

1. Encourage conversations that celebrate relational- and empowerment-based factors of counseling and learning. Class participants can be encouraged to engage in vulnerable and transformative class relationships by working toward rapport, trust, and safety among students and teachers. Educators can also emphasize the importance of community engagement, community-based healing, and the development of mutual empathy.

2. Acknowledge the multiple meaning making systems of counselors and clients. This can be achieved by noting how one's personal worldview is shaped by their immediate sociocultural, political, and historical milieus. Educators can provide opportunities for class participants to explore and validate multiple truths and can encourage students to be critical of objective truth claims and reductionistic counseling approaches.

3. Incorporate learning opportunities for students' diverse learning styles. This may include lecture-based, experiential, seminar-style, and self-guided classroom activities. Educators may facilitate students' intimacy with the subject matter through activities that encourage deep self-reflection.

4. Embrace flexibility. Students should be encouraged to acknowledge and celebrate the fallible and ephemeral nature of individual experience, rather than critique and attempt to eradicate or prune these innate human tendencies. By removing the expectation of perfection, students may be empowered to think creatively and with open curiosity.

5. Facilitate conversations about power in the classroom and in society. This includes the innate power differentials between student and teacher, and client and counselor. This may be achieved through discussions about students' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, including the educators' responsibility as a gatekeeper to the profession. Students are encouraged to contribute to defining the expectations of both teacher and learner and collaboratively establish class guidelines or ground rules. These conversations are also great opportunities to initiate the topics of individual power or agency and systemic oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism.

Helpful References (copy and paste to enlarge):

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Member Spotlight: Dr. Martina Moore

By Blake Sandusky, Ed.S., LPC, LMFT

The AHC annual conference was held this summer in Cleveland, OH. While I have not yet been able to attend an AHC conference, I have heard great things about all of the annual conferences and this year was no exception. If any of you are like me you have probably benefited from attending a conference while not being aware of the vast amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to pull off planning and executing a successful conference. In this edition of *Infochange*, in the member spotlight section, we are happy to spotlight this past years conference committee chair, Dr. Martina Moore.



Dr. Moore has been involved with AHC over the past four years. She also currently is the President and CEO of Moore Counseling and Meditation Services, Inc. in Euclid, OH. She describes humanistic counseling as a method which places the focus of treatment on the individual, their needs, and their potential. She conceptualizes the humanistic counseling session as one that is judgment free and fully authentic while allowing the client to fully find him or herself. Also she believes the humanistic focus of counseling allows for the client to search for the meaning in their lives.

She contributes her development of humanistic philosophy to her upbringing in a diverse environment. As a primary school student Dr. Moore grew up in a diverse neighborhood and went to school with many different types of people. She says that this experience brought her to look at the unique characteristics that each person brings while also looking for what she has in common with others.

There were many different things that Dr. Moore enjoyed and found interesting in this years past AHC conference. The most interesting event for her was the key note address given by Dr. Jim Henson. She greatly enjoyed the historical perspective given on humanistic counseling. Also among the various topics discussed in sessions she points out the interesting similar thread that was shared among the sessions due to their humanistic nature.

Thanks Dr. Moore for you hard work on this year's annual conference! If you are interested in volunteering to work on the upcoming AHC conference then you can contact AHC through the website. I hope to get to meet everyone in Portland next year!



Dr. Hansen and Dr. Moore at the AHC conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

A Poem

By Mansi Brat, M.A., LPC

*I came on the angelic wings
With the clear pure mission
As an angelic being*

*To open the doors, to flow...
To let go...*

*I looked for light,
Opening those doors and
shutting others*

*Why would others open the
doors and connect
When I shut out the light*

*Here I soar, dropping the
coverings, the peels
To grow...*

*To regain freedom, to regain
light
To sing the unsung song
For the unopened blossoms
Here I know,
The morning will surely come
And the harp will surely be
strung!*

Editor's Note

By Hannah Bowers, PhD, LMHC

Happy Fall AHC members!

It is with great anticipation that Jen and I bring you this August issue of the AHC Info Change. As discussed by both Angela and Megan in this issue, I also find myself embarking on new beginnings with the commencement of this academic term. The past transitions to arrive at this point in time have been overwhelming in nature; however, I was able to recently experience a moment of pure clarity through the chaos.

Similar to the start of most courses, my first year students shared their essential reasoning for joining the counseling profession. Within each response was an overwhelming commitment to the humanistic tradition. I couldn't help but smile to myself, and to them, as they expressed their uninhibited and pure desire to enact change upon their communities by helping others realize their potential.

As I reflect on the power of such statements, I am comforted in the potential these future counseling professionals will have on the world at large.

I hope that each of you have the opportunity to reflect on the profound work we do as a whole, and pay homage to the magnificence of helping and healing others.

Best Wishes,
Hannah and Jen
AHC InfoChange Co-Editors



A Focus on “Bullying” and Interpersonal Violence

Jeff L. Cochran, AHC President and author/co-author of:

- *The heart of counseling: Counseling skills through therapeutic relationships, 2nd ed.* (2015, Routledge) &
- *Child-centered play therapy: A practical guide to therapeutic relationships with children* (2010, Wiley)

Our 2015-2016 ACA president, Thelma Duffey is leading a focus within ACA – across as many divisions and branches as possible – around the issue of “bullying” and interpersonal violence. Her idea in part is for us in the counseling field to increase our impact by speaking out with our range of perspectives within a narrowed topic area.

Knowing that this initiative was coming for 2015-2015, I focused our 1st AHC webinar back in March on areas of my work related to the topic. <http://www.anymeeting.com/AssociationForHumanisticCounseling> In that webinar, “Bulling” from Childhood to Adulthood: Understandings & Interventions to Break the Cycle, I focused on bullying or interpersonal high aggression among children, thinking that if we can understand how and why children would “bully” and what helps in interventions with children, the child’s perspective can help us understand “bullying” behaviors in adults as well.

So far in this message, I have place the word “bullying” in quotations, as it is a loosely defined or slang term - I’ll drop that for the coming paragraphs. I look at bullying, in short, as a person acting in hurtful ways toward others as cover for insecurity. I think that in adults it can be hard to see the insecure underside, having been covered over so long. But to me, in children, the insecurity is much easier to see. And to me, therapeutic relationship is the key and core to successful intervention (e.g., insecurity is discovered in therapeutic relationships, and self-worth is fostered or discovered as well). In the webinar, I offered the following “relational, humanistic definition of bullying:”

Abnormal and persistent use of force (physical, social or other – which can be subtle force), in ways that are hurtful to others, to get one’s own psychological needs met (e.g., a sense of personal power, controlling distance in relationships, a sense of emotional and personal safety)

Our newsletter editors and I would like to encourage other AHC voices on the topic of bullying and interpersonal violence. We encourage you to submit articles striving to define bullying and interpersonal violence, as well as areas of intervention, from a humanistic perspective. We encourage interested potential contributors to think of the topic as broadly as possible, perhaps including humanistic perspectives on workplace bullying; interpersonal violence or bullying in dating, other romantic or family relationships; bullying in social media...and more.

Let’s keep the conversation going! The AHC Info Change wants to hear what you have to say about bullying and interpersonal violence! This can include experiences, expertise, works of visual or expressive art, and educational approaches.

To be considered for publication, please submit to infochangeahc@gmail.com before November 22, 2015.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? LETS US KNOW! EMAIL US AT INFOCHANGEAHC@GMAIL.COM